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CROTALARIA SERICEA RETZ. IN FLORA OF ASSAM

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Kanjilal *et al.* (1938) described *Crotalaria sericea* Retz. in Flora of Assam as having falcate or deltoid, leafy, persistent stipules; foliaceous or sometimes setaceous bracts and thinly silky pod.

According to the descriptions and/or keys given by Hooker (1876), Haines (1922), Santapau (1953), Gamble (1957), Cooke (1958), Duthie (1960) and also De Munk (1962) who revised the genus for Flora Malesiana, semilunar or falcate stipules, setaceous bracts and hairy pods are features of *Crotalaria verrucosa* Linn., whereas ovate, foliaceous, reflexed stipules, ovate and foliaceous bracts with glabrous pods are features of *Crotalaria sericea* Retz.

There is a sheet of *Crotalaria* in the Assam Forest Herbarium, Botanical Survey of India, *Kanjilal U. N.* 7598, collected from Panbari, Goalpara on the 29th October, 1919. From notes on *this* sheet, it is evident that the plant was doubtfully placed in *Crotalaria sericea* Retz.; this is shown by a question mark. It is also noted on the sheet "braches 4-gonous! racemes axillary! bracts setaceous! nova sp. ?"

But there is no evidence that this has ever been described as a new species. Probably to accommodate *this* specimen with falcate stipules, setaceous bracts and silky pods, later workers associated with the publication of the Flora of Assam described *Crotalaria sericea* Retz. as having falcate stipules, setaceous bracts and thinly silky pods. Incidentally the place of occurrence of this species is given in the *Flora of Assam* as Goalpara only!

On verification and matching at the Central National Herbarium, Calcutta, the specimen under reference (*Kanjilal U. N.* 7598) was found to be *Crotalaria verrucosa* Linn., a species commonly found in Assam, as evident from the specimens available at the Central National Herbarium, Calcutta. But it is not represented in the Assam Forest Herbarium, Shillong and I feel the later workers might not have noticed the specimens at Central National Herbarium, Calcutta. That may be the reason for its omission in the Flora of Assam.

The description of the specimen under reference is given below.

Shrub up to 2 m high, stem sharply 4-angled, covered with short silky hairs. *Leaves* simple, about 4-13 × 2-6 cm, ovate, cuneate mucronate, thin, entire, more or less glandular-punctate, silky beneath and minutely pubescent above; petiole 5 mm long; midrib as well as veins and reticulation prominent beneath, lateral veins 5-9 pairs. *Stipules* conspicuous, broad, leafy, falcate, pubescent, persistent. *Inflorescence* in lateral leaf opposed lax racemes, many-flowered. Bracts persistent, reflexed, silky,

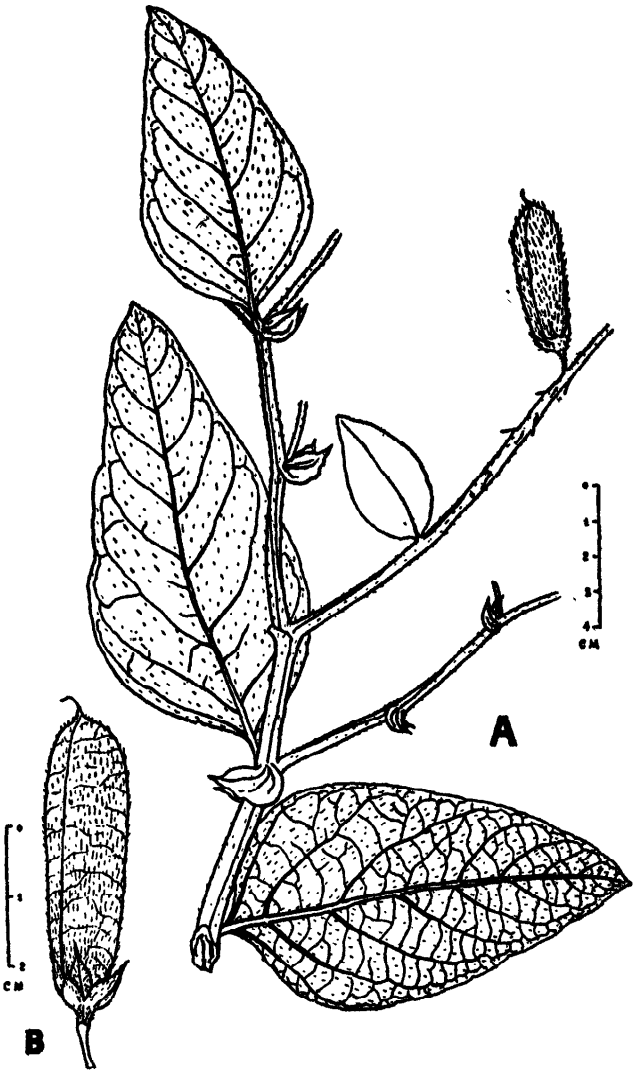

Fig. 1: *Crotalaria verrucosa* Linn.
A. Part of a plant. B. Pad.

setaceous. *Calyx* 1 cm long, deeply 5-lobed, puberulous; lobes subulate, about 5 mm long. *Corolla* purple, standard with darker veins of purple, persistent in fruit; keel pubescent along the joint. Pod about 4 cm long, turgid, beaked, with brown

long hairs all over. *Seeds* thin, reniform, about 18-20 per pod.

This note is written so that it may be of help to workers and students consulting the Flora of Assam.

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